

MOBILITY IN THE WORK OF HARUKI MURAKAMI, FOCUSING ON *DANCE DANCE DANCE* AS A NARRATIVE OF MOBILITY

Inseop Shin
Konkuk University
seoha@konkuk.ac.kr

Abstract

This article discusses how advanced capitalism, criticized in Haruki Murakami's *Dance Dance Dance* (1988), relates to "mobility," which defines human life as well as Murakami's narrative strategy. Various forms of movement in Murakami's novels have yet to be observed in previous studies, possibly due to readings of advanced capitalism and alienation being limited to the Japanese context. Applying the issue of mobility to *Dance Dance Dance* can be a useful tool in analyzing the universality of Murakami's work in the contemporary world.

The concept of mobility includes technological means and infrastructure for movement of individuals, people who move around, networks of people, and places. Research on mobility is interdisciplinary in its direction, and it is only in recent years, even in Europe that the idea of mobility was applied to literary studies. Along with mobility, the concept of "immobility" can also be explored.

Immobility involves a person whose movement is denied or suppressed, the network that the person forms, and the place for such a network. In *Dance Dance Dance*, we find the starting point of mobility in Japan in the late 1980s better than any other novels by the author or by other writers in contemporary Japanese literature.

Murakami might not have intended to deal with this theme. Although he opposes capitalism, the mobility he represents in his novels still works within the capitalist system. The narrator thinks he rejects advanced capitalism, yet his mobility capital in actual life is optimized for the mobility of driving, traveling, and walking. The narrator does not work, but he always has money to spend whenever he feels the need to travel to forget his loneliness.

Moreover, in the adventure of "occult code/travel," the main character always secures safety even if the people around him are in danger. This is also true for the readers: they solve mysterious cases that the protagonist cannot understand, and they are participants in the scene. The fantasy of movement in *Dance Dance Dance* as a mobility narrative is the basic element of the global attributes of Murakami's works.

Keywords

Haruki Murakami, mobility, *Dance Dance Dance*, “occult code/travel,” globalization

About the Author

Inseop Shin is a professor in the Department of Japanese Education and Director of The Academy of Mobility Humanities in Konkuk University, Seoul, South Korea. His interests in scholarship include East Asian literature, diaspora literature, and mobility humanities. In addition to numerous articles, his recent publications include *Light and Dark of Modern and Contemporary Japanese Literature* (2009); “A Narrative of Those on the Move: The Case of Takeo Arishima” in *Kritika Kultura* 28 (2017); and “Ethics in Korean Diaspora Literature in Japan: Writing of Inverted Guilt and Confession” in *Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture*, vol. 42, no. 3 (2018). This paper was supported by Konkuk University in 2019.

MOBILITY IN THE NOVELS OF HARUKI MURAKAMI

Murakami's novels have been translated into more than thirty languages and circulated on a global scale. He is an international writer with "a defined position on the global market" (Nakagawa 15). This suggests that his text has a distinctive quality that facilitates its translation into other languages. By incorporating Americanism into a Japanese setting, Murakami allows readers from all over the world to easily approach his novels regardless of how much or how little they understand Japan.

In addition to this background, previous studies have sought to define the ideas found in Murakami's texts. However, it can be fully admitted that there are many factors to his novels that are based on a trend of globalization that essentially leads to Americanism, which emotionally appeal to the urban middle classes around the world. The purpose of this paper is to examine the often neglected problem of textual mobility through *Dance Dance Dance* as a way to explore the methodology of Haruki Murakami.

As is well known, *Dance Dance Dance* (1988) is the last of the tetralogy that includes *Hear the Wind Sing* (1979), *Pinball, 1973* (1980), and *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982). Therefore, it is possible, as Miharu Nakamura does, to analyze this novel by focusing on the interaction of the characters such as The Rat or Sheep Man (70–77). As Masafumi Yamashita points out, if we look at *Dance Dance Dance* as an independent work, it does not seem like a complete piece (314). Although the novel can be read as a part of a series, it is also a work that can be approached as an individual piece. If we look outside of the approach of reading the novel around the subject matter, it is also possible to set up a framework for analysis that can help us better read the characteristics of Murakami's literature. Applying the issue of mobility to *Dance Dance Dance* can be a useful tool in analyzing the universality of Murakami's work in the contemporary world.

Mobility includes the technological means for movement. The concept contains four basic elements: the ability to move, the moving of an object, the social position or class aspect inherent in movement, and geographic change due to movement (Lee, "Geographical Implication" 148). In other words, the concept of mobility includes technological means and infrastructure for movement in individuals, networks of people, as well as places (Urry 3–60; Kim 280). The research on mobility concerns interdisciplinary direction, and its application to literary texts is a rather recent phenomenon even in Europe. A concept that can be used along with this is "immobility," which entails the denial or suppression of movement in a person, the network that person forms, and the place for such a network (Kim 280).

The text of *Dance Dance Dance* records the start of mobility in Japan in the late 1980s better than any other novel by Murakami, or any other novel in contemporary Japanese literature. The mobility perspective allows an effective analysis to be applied to travel stories that Murakami liked to release, as well as various stories of travel, voyage, and adventure from ancient to modern times. Among its various areas of interest, mobility can contribute to the genealogical research of travel and can also capture social problems contained in mobility as a form of leisure, which has become diversified in modern times.

This paper focuses on whether the change in mobility caused by advanced capitalism characterizes Murakami's literary works, especially *Dance Dance Dance*. This is to expand the possibility of applying the methodology of mobility to literary studies. Analysis of Murakami's texts from the perspective of mobility can provide an alternative viewpoint for the difficulties of criticism in the following series of works that attempt to ideologically locate a world-renowned author from Japan.

THOUGHTS ON MURAKAMI'S LITERATURE AND NEGATIVE EVALUATION

It is interesting to note, however, that in the very same Japan that happened to produce a world-renowned writer, Japanese researchers are very embarrassed about the "Haruki Syndrome." In Japan, literary studies usually focus on finding the historical significance of literary texts and establishing their historical position. There will be hardly any Japanese researchers who object to this proposition. However, it is not easy to locate the literary historical significance of Murakami's works because the fact that his work has acquired globality means that it is outside the scope of Japan.

To understand this it must first be confirmed that the mainstream discourse in Japanese literature studies is that Murakami's work lacks a critical stance on social reality. As Hideto Thuboi well points out, Murakami's novels are read in Japan as "the phenomenon of steadily increasing American readership by moderately mixing international and exotic tastes to concoct a novel zest, and the returning of the American appreciation back in Japan to consolidate his literary position" (69–70). In order to solidify the literary position of Murakami, who was re-imported to Japan, Japanese scholars are obliged to undergo work that they do not wish to engage in.

[Japanese researchers] do not want to be seen as followers who lack a critical mind about the popular writer, with no critical stance on him. At the same time, however, they also do not want to be seen as ignorant, as not understanding a writer that is highly

acclaimed internationally and who is attracting attention on a national scale in Japan. They want to remain as neutral as observers as possible; yet if the media, for instance, asks for their comment on Murakami, they cannot help but momentarily envisage a confrontation from an enormous fandom. (Simizu 90)

Considering Murakami's direction as a writer, he would not have a willingness to operate a mechanism of oppression using his literary influence. However, the media system works ingeniously for a writer that has over 500,000 copies sold by subscription in Japan and a million copies sold within one week of publication.¹ Furthermore, Murakami was awarded the Franz Kafka Prize in 2006 and the Jerusalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society in 2009 and is nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature every year. A kind of idol culture surrounds the writer. Unfortunately, Japanese researchers are left in a position to have to explain why the Haruki syndrome is occurring. Therefore, they sometimes release information books called *Hirano*, which are mixtures of featureless studies of Murakami and his work and try to find the ethics of the era when his works appeared (Miura 30–46); analyze the sense of loss, which is known as a keyword in his literature in the discussion of the self (Katō 139–164, Kuroko 83–104); or explore the allegorical aspect of the narrative (Yamane 7–8).

In an effort to verify his literary achievements after the birth of a great writer, one cannot eliminate the tacit repression of the bestselling author. Even when Kiyosi Kasai charged Murakami for alienating others in the name of sophisticated urban sensibility, he could only do so in a roundabout way by reproving those who praise Murakami such as Saburo Kawamoto and Masai Miura (Kasai 207–233). Even the eminent Japanese critic at Tokyo University, Yōichi Komori, spends a whole volume on the critique of *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) to discuss Murakami's deviation from historical consciousness. However, he does so in a circuitous way: "As a literary critic I cannot but criticize the attitude of the readers that accept the decisive conversion of the author named Murakami towards abandoning historical awareness as a form of healing and self-justification" (Komori 268). Instead of the usual euphemisms peculiar to the Japanese language, Komori's criticism of Murakami here is quite straightforward and scathing. This statement, which is barely comprehensible, simply put, was to find fault with the alliance between Murakami's easygoing attitude to reality and the readers.

For a foreign scholar who is removed from the position of Japanese critics who are under tacit repression by the reading public and the media environment, it seems quite strange to observe the stance of simple praise or roundabout criticism that Japanese scholars take on the Haruki syndrome. It is confusing for the Japanese scholars to evaluate the unprecedented phenomenon of Haruki in the context of the history of Japanese literature.

In other words, researchers accustomed to appraising the value of a text in the context of literary history are now in an embarrassing position in which the text must be recognized because of its ability to sell. Hence, the critics forcibly overlay themes upon Murakami's texts such as the subject and the other, historical awareness, society, and internal conflict. One such endeavor is the attempt to discuss Murakami in the framework of modernism and postmodernism by comparing him with Sōseki Natsume, who is lauded as a national writer of modern Japan. (Handa 118)

However, Murakami's work is difficult to grasp with the ideological backgrounds of Japan alone. In other words, if we remove Japan from our reading of Murakami, what is left, fundamentally, is the question of why his work is welcomed by readers worldwide. His texts should be analyzed through this question.

This article also discusses how the society of advanced capitalism, which is criticized in *Dance Dance Dance*, relates to "mobility" that defines human life as well as Murakami's narrative strategy. It is strange that the various forms of movement in Murakami's novels have not been observed by previous studies, but as mentioned earlier, one reason may be that the readings of advanced capitalism and alienation were limited to the Japanese context.

WHAT ENABLES TEXTUAL MOBILITY

Of course, *Dance Dance Dance* has some aspects that appeal to a global audience, such as the sense of loss or nihilism which often appear in Murakami's other works. Against the backdrop of "the global phenomenon of urbanization through economic development," the works of Murakami certainly have elements to appeal to "the sense of futility of young people who suffer from the discrepancy between prosperous society and the individual" (Akari 222).

The peculiarity of Murakami's work as represented in *Dance Dance Dance* is the exquisite fusion of two disparate elements: "the occult element which cannot be explained by realism" and "I' who observes" "in a calm and realistic manner" the social phenomena (Simizu 94). Murakami depicts the problem of the society of advanced capitalism and its marginalization of the individual, but does not suggest how the individual should overcome the problem. This can be read as an evasion of historical awareness or an escape from reality,¹ but the logic of text is simple and clear. The rest is up to the readers.

When the protagonist of a Murakami novel travels and strolls, absorbed in self-reflection, the reader may also participate in such contemplation and experience a form of self-therapy from a relaxed state. Or the reader may have a chance to reflect on their life. Murakami's texts, circulated around the world, allow readers to devise for themselves a Japanese setting in accordance with their knowledge and culture, and to move and ramble within the landscape along with the characters of the novel. In the process, there will be some readers who find themselves living in the urbanized society of advanced capitalism, and some who may feel a yearning for travel from the interesting development of the story.

There are elements in Murakami's text that enable its mobility; he has a globally compatible style. He is also a translator, and his English-style Japanese is compatible with Americanism around the world. This is apparent when we compare his work to other Japanese novels written in conventional Japanese style that have difficulty in being translated into foreign languages. Globalization operates as a kind of standardization of Americanism, so it can easily move between the boundaries of countries without an explanation of the cultural basis, regardless of whether it is English, Korean, or Chinese.

In his work, there is a sole desire for a utopian world in which man lives a comfortable life in some standardized urban environment. Many of his works portray a tranquil daily life. There is no experience of refugees, no life of the poor—there is only the unfolding of the stable and “beautiful” urban scenery. The following scenes from *Hear the Wind Sing* will be hailed by any reader around the world.

I had time to kill, so I decided to cruise around. Our town occupied a pitifully long and narrow strip running from the ocean up the foot of the mountains. It never changed: a river and a tennis court, a golf course, a lengthy row of large houses, walls upon walls, a handful of tidy tidy restaurants and boutiques, an old library, fields filled with evening primrose, a park with a monkey cage.

I drove the streets that snaked through the hilly residential area before taking the river road down almost to the ocean, where I stopped to cool my feet in the fresh water. Two girls wearing white hats, sunglasses, and deep tans were batting a ball back and forth on the tennis court nearby. The midday sun was scorching, and each swing of their rackets sent a spray of sweat flying across the court. (96)

Who can throw stones at this scene? The snap of the tennis ball going back and forth across the net and the drops of sweat that emanate under the sun evoke sexuality. Besides, the cafes with ivy and the libraries satisfy the small curiosities of everyday life. The idyllic scene of a small city, the setting for the novel, is compatible with a suitable retro taste (or exotic taste) with its mixture of culture, materialism,

and leisure, as well as with urban scenery, throughout the world. Here we find a trace of leisurely life spent floating.

This style of description is found not only in *Hear the Wind Sing* but most of Murakami's texts. Surplus time, drives in the car, leisure activities such as tennis and golf in a natural environment like a river—for foreign readers, the landscape offers a small amount of exoticism (“some nice little restaurants, boutiques, an old library”) and spaces for cultural consumption (library and zoo), and is the definition of “peacefulness.” Moreover, it is all the more symbolic to find another cut in the scenery where “two well-tanned girls on the tennis court, hitting the ball back and forth, wearing their white hats and sunglasses” are swinging their rackets and scattering their sweat onto the court.

The scene is like one from a television commercial. Foreign readers of the novel might discern something of an exotic and international sensibility, in much the same way as they see foreigners appearing as models on their television or internet advertisements. Here, the tranquility of an exotic city and sensibility of the comfortable and leisurely urban middle-class life are combined to lead the reader to a global fantasy.

This becomes the basic condition for the text, which has moved to other geographical and cultural spaces, to be accepted without provoking much resistance in the readers. Except for a few experts, foreign readers do not know deeply about the origin of the creative spirit that is represented in many places within Murakami's works. It can be summarized as the political, social, and cultural impact of the 1969 student movement in Japan and its relationship with the subject. As confirmed in *Dance Dance Dance*, Murakami often inserts experiences of his youth into his work without description of the context (57). But it is not that we need to know the background to read his novels. Those who partake in the intellectual atmosphere of Japanese intellectuals can read the spirit of the age in Murakami's works, but even those who do not share it have little difficulty in reading the novels.

Additionally, foreign readers cannot relate with the Japanese as to how the Jinmu Boom and the subsequent period of rapid economic growth led to changes in the life and culture of Japanese people, and neither are they sensitive to the historical awareness—whether it be positive or negative—that the Japanese should not forget. Nonetheless, foreign readers can read texts in a way that fits their own environment, breaking from the context of Japan. After all, not many foreign readers would be knowledgeable of the fact that Kenzaburō Ōe criticized Murakami for his lack of historical awareness.

Most of Murakami's stories are set in Japan, and this setting is filled with American pop music, rock, and jazz that dominate the ears of the readers (Rubin 245–250). The following is an excerpt from *Dance Dance Dance*, but similar descriptions are found in many other works of Murakami.

All the same, as I got up to go, she stood up too. I got her suitcases into the trunk, then pointed the car out into the snow-swept no-man's-land. Yuki fished a cassette tape out of her bag, popped it into the stereo, and David Bowie was singing. Followed by Phil Collins, Jefferson Starship, Thomas Dolby, Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, Hall & Oates, Thompson Twins, Iggy Pop, Bananarama. Typical teenage girl's stuff. Then the Stones came on with "Goin' to a Go-Go." "I know this one," I boasted. "The Miracles did it ages ago. Smokey Robinson and the Miracles. Years ago when I was fifteen or sixteen."

"Oh," said Yuki with not a flicker of interest. Next it was Paul McCartney and Michael Jackson singing "Say Say Say." The wipers were going full force, batting away at the flakes. Few cars on the road. Almost none in fact. We were warm, riding around in the car, and the rock music pleasant. I even didn't mind Duran Duran. Singing along, I kept our wheels on the straight roads. We did this for ninety minutes, when she noticed the cassette I'd borrowed from the car rental. (107–108)

Sam Cooke's "Wonderful World," as well as Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly, continue to flow while the protagonist drives a rented car. Including repeated occasions, there are 175 instances of singers and songs being mentioned in *Dance Dance Dance* (see Iizuka 134–192). In the novel, the protagonist and a girl named Yuki become close through music, similar to how readers come to relate with the story. Yuki is a girl who always puts the Walkman to her ears. Techniques and objects such as a Sony Walkman, iPods, and mobile phones reorganize the "soundscapes" of urban life (Urry 77). Along the same lines, the car drive is closely linked to the personalization of sound.

And here again, Enka, the modern pop music of Japan, is ignored. This has two implications. First of all, American pop culture that is evocative of exotic sentiments is delivered to the Japanese readers in a consumable form. From the perspective of foreign readers, the novel is set in an exotic country (Japan), but they feel comfort with the setting due to the familiar music.

Next is the issue of the place. The following excerpt is an episode that takes place in the house of the protagonist's friend, who is a popular actor.

It was a penthouse condo, with a spacious living room and two bedrooms and a veranda with a view of Tokyo Tower. Several Persian rugs on the hardwood floor. Ample sofa, not too hard, not too soft. Large potted plants, postmodern Italian lighting. Very little in the way of decorator frills. Only a few Ming dynasty plates on the sideboard, GQ

and architectural journals on the coffee table. And not a speck of dust. Obviously he had a maid too.

“Nice place,” I said with understatement.

[...]

He put a record on a Bang & Olufsen turntable and lowered the cartridge. The speakers were old-favorite JBL P88s, the music an old Bob Cooper LP. “What’ll you have?” he asked.

“Whatever you’re drinking,” I said.

He disappeared into the kitchen and returned with vodka and soda and ice and sliced lemons. As the cool, clean West Coast jazz filtered through this glorified bachelor pad, I couldn’t help thinking, antiseptic or not, the place was comfortable. I sprawled on the sofa, drink in hand, and felt utterly relaxed. (*Dance* 141–142)

The narrator meets his friend Gotanda. The scene in which the narrator moves from a bar to Gotanda’s house and drinks while listening to music is truly “global.” The scene shows the globalization or universality of mobility. What is noteworthy is that they did not meet at an *izakaya* (居酒屋), a Japanese-style pub, nor did they go to the friend’s house with a Japanese-style garden where his wife would bow down to greet them.

In other words, elements that captured the geographical characteristics of Japanese culture in the past, such as the kimono or Mt. Fuji, no longer appear. Inside the luxury mansion on the top of the building overlooking the Tokyo Tower, the two men are surrounded by classy furnishings under Italian-style lighting and relax with vodka and jazz. This is an extravagant scene that is easily understood by any urban middle class of whichever culture without being strained by peculiar cultural customs of a strange place.

THE MOBILITY OF DRIVING, TRAVELING, AND WALKING IN THE TEXT

Subaru, the brand of the narrator’s beloved used car, is mentioned forty times in the novel, and a drive is mentioned fifty-two times. When the protagonist bought a secondhand Subaru, he was delighted because the car was equipped with a stereo to listen to music—“Hardly any miles on it, stereo and air-conditioning. A real first for me” (*Dance* 16). He rented a car because he wanted to listen to music while waiting for a delayed airplane at the airport.

It is important to note that the rented car was not a means of transportation, nor was it intended to drive around and tour the landscape. The car secured a personal “place” for two people in the open space of the airport. The automobile is an

independent “place” where individuality is guaranteed, and so the evolution of the system around automobiles affects the concept of a “place” for people. Described as an “intermittent” in mobility theory (Urry 250), the setting of the car in which one is able to listen to music is a private “intermittent,” a substitute for home when on the move.

Let’s look into the storyline of *Dance Dance Dance* to explore how the mobility of driving, traveling, and walking are involved with narrative structure. The novel begins by retelling the dream of the Dolphin Hotel in a foreshadowing of the crisis of the protagonist who is thrown into advanced capitalism. He explains his dream: “I often dream about the Dolphin Hotel. In these dreams, I’m there, implicated in some kind of ongoing circumstance” (4).

In *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982), the Dolphin Hotel is in Sapporo, Hokkaido, where the protagonist and Kiki, a woman with a supernatural hearing ability, once stayed. The story set in Hokkaido in 1978 ends with the dual suicide of The Rat who is a friend of the protagonist and a strange sheep who had a mysterious power to control society, and the disappearance of Kiki.

In *Dance Dance Dance*, which expands spatially to Tokyo, Hokkaido, and Hawaii of 1983, the narrator takes an adventure trip to the Dolphin Hotel in Sapporo, Hokkaido, boarding airplane and train to find Kiki. The mobility of this adventure trip is important in the novel because it is an “occult code/travel” combining elements of occult crisis or mystery novel with the “socially constructed gaze of a tourist” (Lee 88).

If the “occult code” is removed, the trip loses its meaning. The journey in the novel is basically an “occult code/travel.” A trip is meant for leisure, but there is always a latent danger. The accident is lurking in the means of transport, and the alien land always arouses both alertness and curiosity.

Dance Dance Dance invites the readers to the “occult code/travel” which is a mixture of tension for danger and leisure of travel. It quotes Agatha Christie novels and gives a sense of tension to the reader, who reads the novel in safety, as seen in this sentence: “Hard nut to crack, eh, Watson?” I addressed the ashtray before me” (276). But this signifies that the narrator and the readers are in a safe area, because their relationship is like that of Holmes and Watson, who solve the case despite the disappearances, murder, suicide, and the move to an alien world.

“Arriving at Sapporo, I decided to take a leisurely stroll to the hotel. It was a pleasant enough afternoon, and I was carrying only a shoulder bag” (23). The mobility of walking is necessary for making up for the lack travel aboard a car,

a boat, or an airplane (Solnit 6), and walking is inserted throughout the novel. Drinking coffee on his walk in a commonplace city that is described as “We could have been in any city in Japan” (*Dance* 23), the narrator falls into loneliness. “I was, sitting in this coffee shop, drinking my coffee, feeling a desperate loneliness. I alone was the outsider. I had no place here” (23). This kind of nostalgia of a traveler is also a symbol of a solitary individual walking through an anonymous city. Without overstatement, Murakami represents the lonely sentiment of the person who takes a walk.

The loneliness of the narrator is amplified at the destination of his walking. The Dolphin Hotel, which used to be a shabby low-rise hotel, has been transformed into an ultra-modern high-rise hotel due to land development in the area. The development of the transport system imposed by capitalism changes the surrounding area from “land” to “landscape” (Urry 193). It removes the uniqueness of the Dolphin Hotel as a memorable place of the time spent with Kiki and replaces it with a mere landscape.

The image of the hotel, built with the input of huge capital, is paired with Disneyland, which opened in 1983. “March 1983,” written specifically in the first chapter of the novel, suggests the opening of Tokyo Disneyland. In Disneyland, it is possible to spend a fantastic time outside of reality because there is an adventure in Disneyland that is not distinguished from simulation. The narrator was also initially brought to Sapporo by a mysterious dream. The narrator thinks of Star Wars, saying “And not merely gone, it’d been replaced by this idiotic Star Wars high-tech hotel-a-thon” (*Dance* 33). As for the Hawaii scene that follows, the theory of mobility explains the loss of the quality of place as a transformation from “land” to “landscape.” The narrator has an affinity with Yumiyoshi at the front desk and says, “you looked like you could be the spirit of the hotel” (51). But this too lacks the sense of “living.”

Through the strange woman called Yumiyoshi, the narrator moves into a bizarre space where The Sheep Man lives. The occult adventure in the novel, which is caused by a horrifying space movement that cannot be explained in logical terms, occurs at a hotel that is like a theme park. Meanwhile, The Sheep Man promises the narrator’s salvation, and after the mysterious experience, the narrator takes a stroll in the city of Sapporo. Then he watches a movie featuring Gotanda, a junior high school alumnus who is now a famous actor. Kiki, with whom the narrator parted for some mysterious reason in the past, appears for a one-night stand.

Again, on his way back to Tokyo to meet Gotanda and solve the riddle involving The Sheep Man and Kiki, the narrator takes a flight with Yuki, a thirteen-year-old girl. According to Yumiyosi, the girl’s mother, Ame, is a talented photographer

who has little sense of reality. She stayed at the Dolphin Hotel. But forgetting her daughter in the hotel, she suddenly was absorbed in something and went to Kathmandu.

Considering these aspects, the novel is also a narrative of people with the great ability to be mobile. Though you may wish to go on a trip to Kathmandu, not many people would be able to do so instantly. The determinants of mobility include physical characteristics, passion, access to traffic and communication, time-space constraints, knowledge, and licenses (Urry 38–39). Of course, financial ability is a must on top of this. Aside from the extreme cases of mobility capital, such as Yuki's mother in *Dance Dance Dance*, the narrator also has extraordinary mobility capital from the perspective of a mobility paradigm.

Most of all, the narrator is a *freeter*, and even though he does not work for a while, he just thinks “Money wasn’t a problem. I had saved plenty enough to live on, and I wasn’t thinking about what came later” (*Dance* 12). He enjoys a drive in his beloved Subaru, or when he needs a car in the place he visits, he rents a car. When he takes a walk he says, “I bought a newspaper, headed out to a nearby Dunkin’ Donuts and had two plain muffins with two large cups of coffee,” and “Then I got in a taxi and told the driver to take me to the biggest library in Sapporo” (54). Either when walking or taking a taxi, he has excellent mobility capital that allows him to avoid taking public transportation, like the bus or subway.

Is this possible in reality? Murakami’s work is criticized for this aspect of fantasy, but readers may consume the mobility of adventure not unlike the fantasy of Disneyland. The narrator returns to Tokyo and resumes his friendship with Gotanda. Gotanda, who has been living in solitude, also gets close enough to the narrator to confide in him. Gotanda frankly reveals his relationship with Kiki, the high-class call girl whom the narrator had been looking for. Then the two men have a heart-to-heart talk with each other.

The narrator, who has been sauntering around the streets of Tokyo or driving in his car, has a platonic affection for a beautiful girl with psychic talent. Even after he returns to Tokyo, he goes to restaurants and drives with Yuki, who has been living alone. These features provide enough elements for this text to be called a mobility novel. The narrator eventually goes to Hawaii with Yuki where her divorced mother stays, this time with the suggestion and financial support from her father. As Yuki is underage, he makes up for her weakness in mobility, and through his supply of capital, their mutual mobility network is realized.

It should be noted again that this novel is set in 1983 and was published in 1989. According to an article on the Japanese tourism promotion website *Travel Vision*,

“the number of Japanese tourists visiting Hawaii increased sharply in the 1980s,” reaching “about 2 million in 1990 out of about 7 million tourists per year.” It also said that “during the Japanese bubble economy from 1986 to 1991,” Hawaii was known as a “shopping paradise,” and information about “the shopping malls in Honolulu” spread throughout Japan (n.p.).

As it is now, Hawaii was a choice holiday destination for the Japanese middle class at the time, and the novel features a scene in which the characters purchase goods at “a shopping mall in Honolulu.” The narrator asks Yuki, “What exactly is the difference between Disneyland and Hawaii?” (*Dance* 210). The fantasy of mobility forms a chain of hotels, Tokyo Disneyland, and Hawaii, alluring readers into an adventure of “occult code/travel.”

The narrator who has been having a lovely time on the Hawaiian beach with the girl happens to meet Kiki in Honolulu. Following her, he arrives at a strange building and enters another time and space, eventually ending up encountering six bleached skeletons. After this mysterious experience, the narrator boards an airplane to Tokyo, and wanders around or drives on the streets of Tokyo, pondering over the identity of the six skeletons. At this time, his walk becomes an important factor in sustaining him.

I left the library and ate a quick lunch nearby, then went for a walk, waiting for a brilliant notion to pop into my head. No such luck. I walked to Meiji Shrine, stretched out on the grass and looked up at the sky. (*Dance* 264–267)

Quoting a sentence from Rousseau’s *Confessions*, Rebecca Solnit underlines the deep correlation between walking and contemplation: “I can only meditate when I am walking. When I stop, I cease to think, my mind only works with my legs” (14–22). In this sense, we may be able to discuss the “humanities of walking” out of the framework of the historical and philosophical significance and symbolism of the novel.

The most notable aspect about the storyline mentioned above is the “occult” adventure and travel. In other words, the novel is wrapped in death, something alien and dangerous, while on the other hand, it is interwoven with pleasant travel and food, walking, driving, and leisure. Murakami is writing this novel in a pattern of discrepancy between the simultaneous urban development of globalism that is advanced capitalism and the individual. But, strictly speaking, it is a kind of superficial concern. It should be noted here that the novel is very meticulous in its description of mobility, which anyone of the urban middle class would prefer in a global environment. It is not only a trip, but a mobility with the danger and pleasure that is tinged with the mood of mystery novels.

“ADVANCED CAPITALISM” AND MOBILITY

In *Dance Dance Dance*, advanced capitalism is consciously mentioned five times. Among them, the scene in which it is spoken by Gotanda is impressive.

That's my world. Azabu, European sports car, first-class. Stupid, meaningless, idiotic bullshit. How did all this . . . this . . . this total nonsense get started? Well, it's very, very simple. You just repeat the message and repeat the message and repeat the message. You pound that baby in. Until everybody believes it. Like a mantra. Azabu, BMW, Rolex, Azabu, BMW, Rolex, Azabu, BMW, Rolex, Azabu, . . . (270)

Even about his luxurious “penthouse condo,” he says, “Wouldn't need a condo that looked like this. Wouldn't need a Maserati. None of that. Only a decent job and our own little place” (143), and so through Gotanda's mouth the author takes somewhat of a serious posture in the criticism of advanced capitalism. It is a widely accepted view that advanced capitalism produces discrimination and the alienation of individuals. Unable to escape from the bondage of luxury condominiums overlooking the Tokyo Tower and the fancy cars in Azabu, Gotanda calls a prostitute, yearns for his ex-wife, murders in hallucination, and eventually commits suicide. What is the nature of the criticism raised when Gotanda, unable to secure “Only a decent job and our own little place,” ends his life with suicide? In order for such criticism raised by Gotanda to be accepted as sincere, the life of the figure should be distant from “advanced capitalism.” As we have seen earlier, the protagonist is an ordinary man with no proper job. He claims he lives in a small apartment, owns a used car, and does not spend a lot of money; he is showing a kind of resistance.

It is ironic, however, that the popularity of Murakami's works would not be possible without globalization based on advanced capitalism. The literature of Haruki Murakami appeared with the term *Otaku*, which is based on the real world from “the starting point when Japanese culture, which reached a consumer society in the 1980s, turned itself into a subculture” (Ohtsuka 9). Here, “Otaku’ is an escape from ‘reality’ and because of that, it is usually labelled as autistic. But in reality, ‘Otaku’ does not have any ‘reality’ that should be avoided” (17).

Murakami's literary works, therefore, have “inherent statelessness and global attributes found in Hollywood and Disneyland” (Ohtsuka 16)² based on “American pop music or fashion items, which is a global subculture” (10) rather than criticism of contemporary society and culture. Therefore, the consumption of “advanced capitalism” exists, but its solution is weak. It is ironic that it finds mobility through its translation of text and the acquisition of readership around the world.

This is not a matter that the author intended for or not. Although he opposes capitalism, the mobility he represents in his work is already working within it. The narrator is ardently opposed to capitalism, yet his mobility capital in actual life is optimized for the mobility of driving, traveling, and walking. The narrator does not work, but never runs out of money; he is liked by others and fills his loneliness with travel.

Moreover, in the adventure of “occult code/travel,” the main character always secures safety even if the people around him are in crisis. This is also true for the readers. They solve mysterious cases that the protagonist cannot understand, and like Holmes’s Watson, are participants in the scene. In this sense, the fantasy of movement in *Dance Dance Dance* as a mobility narrative can be seen as the basic element of the global attribute of Murakami’s works.

Notes

1. The above quotation is about the situation when *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* was published in 2013. “Haruki Murakami’s new issue has exceeded 1 million copies in total,” *Da Vinci News*, 18 April 2013, <https://ddnavi.com/news/135442/a/>.
2. Comparing Haruki Murakami with Banana Yoshimoto, Ohtsuk argues a theory of subculture. Above evaluation is an analysis of Banana Yoshimoto, yet it can also be applied to Murakami.

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